

**KARLOVA UNIVERZITA V PRAZE**  
**Fakulta sociálních věd**  
**Institut politologických studií**

***Master's Thesis Assessment***

**AUTHOR:** Bulat Kemalov

**TITLE OF THE THESIS:** *Multiculturalism in Russia. Muslim Population Case Study [A case Study of a Muslim Population?]*

**ASSESSED BY:** Emil Souleimanov, IMS FSV

**ASSESSMENT TYPE:** Supervisor

**1. ASSESSMENT OF THE THESIS CONTENT**

ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES	MARK
Relevancy of the topic in relation to the current scientific knowledge	1
Originality of the thesis, contribution to the science subject field	2
Integrity and scale of sources and literature relevant to the subject study	2
Ability for critical appraisal of the sources	3
Standards of working with sources	2
Methodology and its relevancy to the subject study and thesis goals	3
Logic of the thesis structure	1
Ability to argue, cohesion and coherence of the argument	2
Terminology in the relevant field	1-2
Adhesion to the citation norm	2
Language, stylistic and formal standard of the thesis	2

**COMMENTARY:**

Bulat has picked up an extremely important topic of international (or transnational for that matter) affairs that has become compelling not only in the member states of the EU, but also in Russia, a genuinely multiethnic society. He has succeeded in properly addressing some key concepts (multiculturalism, social diversity, etc.) that are closer to sociology and social anthropology than the field of his traditional focus and the discipline he has been studying at Charles University. In fact, he has demonstrated both the ability to think independently – and come up with clear and yet sophisticated conclusions pertinent to the area of his research, and analytical skills that have helped him outsource and interpret a wide range of data. The strength

of Kemal's research rests on his analytical skills, courage to deal with a controversial topic and still produce original thoughts. Besides, in terms of general knowledge, the biggest strength of the study is in its empirical part as Kemal is able to draw from his first-hand knowledge of the topics covered. The weakness of his study rests primarily in the absence of a clear-cut methodological part which downgrades the outcomes – and the scholarly value for that matter – of the whole text. In a study of this scope and addressing this kind of questions (by the way, research questions and hypotheses are nowhere to find!), a critical analysis of sources would have been more than appreciated; its lack, again, reduces the virtue of the study significantly, as does the vague and not too logical structure of the study. For instance, it remains far from clear why the case study of Tatarstan is detailed separately from the other empirical parts (Chapter 2), just after the main body of the text has been laid down.

Last but not least, I am quite doubtful when it comes to the very concept of multiculturalism (even though I very much understand that this couldn't have been a task for Kemal to handle appropriately). Are the Tatars culturally different from the Russians? – If yes, what are the cultural features that make up their otherness? It seems that the author has focused on religion as a marker of cultural difference, yet in my opinion, a distinct religion doesn't necessarily imply cultural difference since this is very much a symbolic issue; in their daily lives, Tatars and Russians have come to achieve a high degree of cultural closeness. Apart from symbolic issues (religion, ethno-nationalism, etc.) no significant – or true – cultural differences might be observed in the way in the socio-cultural realm. Yet I realize that the very concept of multiculturalism is marked by a considerable degree of vagueness and obscurity which is difficult to measure – and grasp – in scholarly work that tends to look into the essence of things.

## **2. QUESTIONS FOR THE DEFENSE**

1. How would you define culture? – and would you claim that Tatars and Russians are indeed different in practical terms?
2. What methodological approach did you use while carrying out research of your study?
3. What are your main findings of your study – and is it possible to apply them in other areas (Germany, United Kingdom, etc.) where multiculturalism is said to be facing a serious crisis?

## **3. SUGGESTED MARK**

I suggest that very good (2) or good (3) depending on the author's defense (and addressing the three questions outlined above).

Date: 18/06/2012

Signature: